

“YA”

Santiago, Chile

‘We Are All Addicts’

Mukta Kaur Khalsa, Director of SuperHealth, Yogic program for Addictive Behavior

The American psychologist is the creator of a yogic system to overcome addictive behaviors that has spread throughout the world and has recognition from the United Nations. Mukta Kaur Khalsa says addictions are not sicknesses but rather conducts which can be modified.

Mukta walks smiling through the corridors of the San Borja Arriaran Hospital in Santiago a labyrinth of a building currently being remodeled, with sounds of hammers and soldering, the smell of chlorine, lost people and cold coming in through the windows.

She is with a group of teachers from the Narayan International School of Yoga, landed in Chile to teach a SuperHealth training course. This is a program that was founded more than 30 years ago together with the master of Kundalini Yoga in the west, Yogi Bajan. Today it is taught in Spain, Germany, Bolivia, Colombia, and the United States among others.

As a matter of fact this Doctor of Counseling and Psychology visits Chile as the first stop on a tour which takes her to Argentina and Ecuador, then a stopover in New Mexico where she lives.

Mukta is originally from New York. When she started practicing Kundalini Yoga she began on a path against drug addiction which today has made her the Special Representative of 3HO Foundation to the Office of Drug Control and Crime of the United Nations. She is the author of a well-read book called ‘Meditations for Addictive Behavior’ which has been translated from English to Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Russian.

Combining Eastern wisdom and Western knowledge, SuperHealth tackles not only addictions to drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, but also addictions to food, shopping, work and the internet. Originally SuperHealth was developed in a rehabilitation hospital in Tucson, Arizona which she directed for 18 years and has been approved by the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Health Organizations in the United States.

**‘What are addictions?’** We ask her after the welcome workshop, which was attended by three psychiatrists and another 20 interested people. This was the day before the formal training course was to begin for another 50 people from all over Chile.

‘An addiction is the use of any outside stimulus which can not be given up of its own accord. People look for a way to feel complete within themselves. When that is lacking, that is why they use drugs; but that is not the answer.’

The 5,000 year old yogic science is a system which allows people to feel good naturally; elevated, healthy, complete and happy.'

**'You do not agree then, with the Alcoholic Anonymous' assumption of addiction being a lifelong sickness?'**

'Our philosophy is that all people have difficulties, challenges and tragedies. That's what life is about. However, we think we can learn from our errors without necessarily continuing to talk, think and live in the past'.

**Do you honestly think that anyone can change? And improve themselves?**

'Of course. It's possible. Each one of us has the destiny and the birthright to be happy. What happens is that sometimes we create our own misfortune because we are emotionally invested in the outcome of a situation; we want it manifested in a certain way as we've storied it in our mind. It is important to learn to be disciplined. The difference between a yogi and a person lacking self-control is that the undisciplined one says "I want this to happen"; they force the situation even though it may not be in their best interest. A yogi has the power of projection .... the ability to attract just like a magnet whatever is best for him/her; the right people, the right opportunities, resources and the best environment.'

**How does SuperHealth work?**

'SuperHealth works with mental self-control. A person without self-control or discipline becomes afflicted with pain, in so far as their lives are based on feelings and emotions. On the other hand a person with discipline has the humility to make decisions based on wisdom, evaluating the pros and cons and having the ability to be patient, wait, meditate and see what comes.'

**And you can't ask for that 'wisdom' from those who take drugs or can you?**

People who take drugs don't want to take drugs. They don't want to damage themselves or hurt their families. What happens is that they don't know any other option - they've been reduced to the most fundamental earthly existence. They don't know that there is someone in their lives who is willing to give them a hand. You need to win their hearts first, not their minds. SuperHealth has available a range of techniques which help them. This includes breath control exercises, yoga, meditation and diet.'

**Is SuperHealth a complementary program or can it stand alone?**

'It is a complementary to traditional medicine. Definitely we work with the medical community. There are people who need to be medicated and they should work with their doctor. Often people who take drugs have other disorders like anxiety or depression.'

**In Chile the level of people with depression is high.**

'Not just in Chile. It is a global phenomenon because life becomes unsatisfying. People live in fantasies, they don't live in reality. We see films and shows on television where life is like a dream. Then the gap appears, the void between that perfect world and my imperfect one; that makes a person feel unhappy and dissatisfied.'

**Do you think there are some addictions more serious than others?**

'We all have a tendency for an addictive behavior -- to something, including alcohol, food, relationships, worry, drugs even the way we think. Sometimes people think "I'm not good enough" or "I'm not going to get that job". They don't realize that they don't believe in their own capacity and therefore become their own worst enemy. But if we start the day meditating, doing some breathing, yoga, meditation and feeling connected to God who gave us the breath, then we develop the ability to be constant, firm, stable and consolidated.'

**And what if the person doesn't believe in God, does SuperHealth work for them?**

'Whether you call it God or Universal Truth, even if you don't call it anything, it doesn't matter. Something keeps you alive, supporting you. And if you close your mouth and your nose at the same time in three minutes your life is over. We all have breath and we know that the way of breathing affects our mental state. The more oxygen that enters our brain the more conscious we become. If your breathing is limited, your thoughts are superficial and limited and then you become emotional, reactive, anxious, worried, frustrated, depressed and stressed. If you breathe deeply expanding your lung capacity, more oxygen gets to your brain and awakens your conscience. A person can not change until their consciousness has been elevated. 70% of the people who make the change attribute it to a shift in their conscious awareness. The other 30% is a particular technique to facilitate change.'

**In respect to Kundalini techniques, how do mantras work? Is it possible for a song to generate a change?**

'It is part of the yogic technology. The music stimulates different emotions. That is known. There is music that desensitizes, other music that is very emotional and still other music which elevates. We know that sound affects our thoughts. What happens with the repetition of mantras (sacred sounds) is that the nerve endings on the tip of the tongue and 84 meridian points on the upper palate behind the teeth stimulates the hypothalamus to activate the pineal gland. This also develops the frontal lobe which enables you to make decisions based on wisdom. It doesn't matter whether the person understands what the mantra means or not. The affect is the same. That's how Kundalini yoga works. It is a science - precise and scientific.'

**Rehabilitation treatments usually take a year or more. How long does a person take to heal with SuperHealth?**

'It depends of the severity of each case and how much the health has been compromised. But if a person is serious with their practice and does yoga and meditation for 31 minutes every day and consumes a diet of certain juices and foods, the result is rapid. In 40 days the method becomes a way of life. Being spiritual is not something you practice in the morning and act like an idiot the rest of the day.' It is a discipline for everyday life.

**That is exactly one of the things most frequently criticized about yoga. It is easy to be spiritual inside a yoga practice room, but far more difficult to be spiritual in everyday life.**

'Of course. It's all about applying consciousness to everyday life - in my business decisions, family, in my relationships and in the care I give to others. That's what we call applied consciousness.'